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Question1: The only way that farm program payments will not be bid into the price of land and cash rents is if you can somehow make them a 'surprise' to the farmer who receive them. For example the disaster payments have always been a big unknown to us farmers as to whether or not we would actually get anything. They have gotten a bad rap in the past but are actually the best way to support the farm economy and small towns. As to the question of new farmers, it has always been tough for the young to get started. I think we should have some type of land reform plan. Perhaps a capital gains tax free exemption, for 160 acres or so, selling to a beginning farmer who has no other land holdings. The large retiring farmer could break his land up into small farms again and avoid a large tax bite.

Question2: I know the big deal these days is 'free trade'. I am sorry, but I, in my small scope, cannot now, nor could I ever see the benefit to our country of importing something that we can grow, dig, or make right here at home. These free trade agreements border on giving up our sovereignty as a nation. When another country can say to us that we can, or cannot pay our citizens for growing, or not growing something, and enforce it by international law, we've got a big problem. Lets just grow our farmer base, and let them and market prices decide what they grow. As far as I know the biggest market is still right here in the U.S. If other countrys don't want our products they will make up some excuse to keep it out, ie... no GMO, no BSE, no Karnal bundt ect. These types of 'scares' are all they need to justify keeping our products out. Really all they are doing is protecting their farm jobs, as we should.

Question3: I think it is simply a matter of having a much lower payment limitation. Take the top monies away from the big farm units and spread it around on smaller farmers. You will see a reversal of consolidation and new farmers will spring up almost overnight. Be careful though to verify that these are real farmers and not just "paper farmers". Payment limitations need to be REALLY REAL!

Crop insurance has taken a large portion of the risk out of the equation for many. It is good that the system is subsidized, or most farmers would not buy crop insurance. Even with the subsidy It is still barely affordable. I think that less subsidy should go to the type of crop insurance that the farmer has to verify yields, and more to the group risk and GRIP type policies. These are easier to administer and should be made available in all areas and for all crops. Also they eliminate yield fraud.

Question4: Go ahead and make the payments tied to soil conservation, but not for trade agreements please. Here is a letter I sent the last time we were debating a new farm bill.

Dear Senator Brownback,

Here is an idea that maybe helpful in planning of farm programs. My understanding of the CRP program is that it was originally intended to stop the farming of highly erodible land while at the same time

reduce the huge surplus of grain in the country. I believe it has achieved that goal up until recently.

I believe the program is a failure because it lays useable land aside and its scope is not vast enough to truly regenerate the land. Ten years is not long enough! Estimates of topsoil production say that it takes nearly 100 years to create 1 inch of topsoil. I am sure you already know the biology so I will get to my point. We need a program for our highly erodible soils that allows farmers to farm them while at the same time build soil structure and reduce grain surpluses.

I propose that we encourage farmers to go completely no-till on all erodible lands (or all lands). We could do this by a per acre no-till subsidy that would start out modestly and increase each year that the land was not tilled until say twelve consecutive years were accumulated. At that point the payment would level off at the maximum allowable payment.

A penalty would be imposed if a farmer needed to till some of his acres. The penalty would perhaps be a set back of two years payment increase on the schedule (see below).

Here is a general simple outline of my proposal. This is an example only and not a suggestion for actual payment levels.

Year 1. Farmer receives 2 dollars per acre to no-till his field.

Year 2....\$4

" 3....\$6

" 4 \$8

ect. ect.

Year 12...\$24

Etc. Maximum payment under this schedule would be 24 dollars/acre.

A farmer who is already farming no-till would start at year one, the same as a farmer who needed the program to convince him to try some no-till.

Here is an example of the penalty for tilling a field. If a farmer was in his third year and decided he needed to till a field for whatever reason, he would be set back to the payment level of year no. 1. Also he would receive no payment the year that he tilled his field for that field. If a farmer was in the 8th year of his schedule and tilled a field he would be set back to the 6th year payment level etc. and so on. Of course this farmer would receive no payment the year that he tilled his field. The next year he would be set back to the 6th year payment level and if he tilled two years in a row he would be set back four years to the 4th year payment level.

This would strongly discourage a farmer from tilling the soil. Some tillage will always be necessary however, to level fields from a muddy harvest, break compaction in heavy traffic areas or fix a small ditch. For tiny areas of tillage as in field entrances or the ditch repair no penalty would need to apply.

I think this would greatly improve our farmed lands over the long haul. It would let each farmer decide if tillage is worth losing a full years payment for and being set back on the schedule by two years.

Also I have always wondered why we have programs to plant trees and grass but no payment to keep land that could be farmed but isn't from going under the plow. There should be something to keep trees already growing along rivers and streams in place, and the same for grass areas that have soils that could easily be farmed.

Question5: Two things. 1. Create more small farmers as I have advocated and addressed in the questions above. 2. We should have a law in this country to address the urban sprawl issue. Everyone wants a home and most also want wildlife to have a home. I think we should require new

construction areas to purchase from rural areas a number of acres of easment for every acre that is converted to urbania (my word). I don't know how many, maybe 10 or 15 acres of easment per converted acre would moderate growth. This easment payment would go to the farmer willing to put his land into a perpetual farming(non-development) agreement. The price would be determined on the open market and land productivity should be similar to the land that is being converted. This would bring new monies into the rural areas while at the same time reserve large tracts for farming and wildlife. Also this would increase the cost of new construction and also bring a premium to existing structures.

Question6: Renewable energy sounds good when we have a large surplus of grain. I don't think I will feel too good about it though, when in the future millions of people are starving because of a world wide dry spell and I am filling my car up with what could have been used for food. Lets let the private sector figure out what new markets and products need to be developed. P.S. I see as I am using your Edit feature, that the questions have been changed/reduced on the next page so that my answers don't make sense for the question asked. Please fix this problem for the next comment submitter. Thank You, Loren